

Troy asks about consolidating county offices

■ Commissioner wants county auditor, treasurer, recorder to consider staff consolidations to save money, improve efficiency

John Arthur Hutchison

JHutchison@News-Herald.com

Twitter: @newshealdjah

11.30.11

Lake County Commissioner Daniel P. Troy has formally asked three countywide elected officials to seriously discuss future staff consolidations among their three offices.

Troy made the request in a recent letter to Auditor Edward H. Zupancic, Treasurer John S. Crocker and Recorder Frank A. Suponcic.

The commissioner said with the announcement Crocker and Suponcic won't seek re-election next year,

the time is right to begin the discussion.

"We are all aware that revenues are shrinking and this has generated a greater demand for public policy that emphasizes shared services and improved efficiency in governmental operations," Troy wrote.

The commissioner acknowledged the Ohio Revised Code requires election of three separately elected officials.

"I do not believe that it prohibits the sharing of personnel that can be cross-trained to perform any of the clerical duties of these three departments," Troy said.

See County, Page A6



Troy



Duncan Scott/DSScott@News-Herald.com

Kim Deutsch, a deputy auditor in the real estate division, works in the Lake County Auditor's Office in Painesville. Commissioner Daniel P. Troy has asked the county recorder, treasurer and auditor to consider consolidating employees among the three offices.

A6 Wednesday, November 30, 2011

County

From Page A1

Zupancic has some concerns about the letter and its timing.

"In less than a year, there will be a new treasurer and new recorder," Zupancic said. "In my opinion, that may be the time to look at this with those people coming on board."

He has concerns about the possibility of checks and balances between the offices and county government could erode.

"I wonder if we have an employee working for both offices, if you have someone writing checks and redeeming checks is that a good practice?" Zupancic said.

Crocker doesn't have a major problem with what Troy proposes, but he said it's a little premature.

"You're going to have two officer holders leaving office, to impose something at this

time, doesn't seem like the right timing," the treasurer said.

Crocker said his office and the Auditor's Office have helped each other when necessary.

"We already have been doing things like that, and we've made tremendous cuts," Crocker said.

When he first began as treasurer in 1994, he had a staff of 16, which is now down to eight through technology implementation and not replacing retired workers.

Crocker said he thinks Troy's idea is impractical because there isn't downtime for his employees anymore.

"We're working year round, and we have a lot of delinquent taxes, and that's the nature of the times, and we have people working on that year round," Crocker said.

Suponcic agreed the proposal and staffing should be evaluated.

"I think the timing is interesting — now it comes up and all these years it's been quiet,"



Zupancic



Crocker



Suponcic

For more on consolidation, go to www.News-Herald.com

Suponcic said. "The problem with that, at this point from my office's standpoint, is our office is understaffed."

Even though there is a reduced transaction volume in the Recorder's Office, Suponcic said it might be difficult to have his employees share duties with other offices.

"I'm not saying it can't be done, but I'm saying from my office it might not be practical, since I'd be the one borrowing employees," he said.

Despite what each initially thinks, the three elected office holders each said they would be willing to discuss the proposal with the commissioner.

The Recorder's Office has a budget of about \$530,000 this year with nine employees, including three who work 32 hours a week, plus another who is currently on leave.

Crocker said his office has a

general fund budget of \$361,390 this year, plus \$404,000 in the delinquent tax budget that is outside the general fund.

The Auditor's Office has a general fund budget of \$849,157 this year, plus \$630,723 for information technology and \$46,743 for real estate assessment, Chief Deputy Auditor Michael T. Matas said.

Troy said he wants to be creative and look at efficiencies and his plan could be a way without asking the Ohio General Assembly to change state laws.

"We're going to have to continue to cut and shrink county government," Troy said. "I think there could be some efficiencies where we could consolidate staff and they could be cross-trained to do the administrative functions of those offices, rather than keep the separate entities in place and having to reduce staff and creating a dysfunctional problem."

State